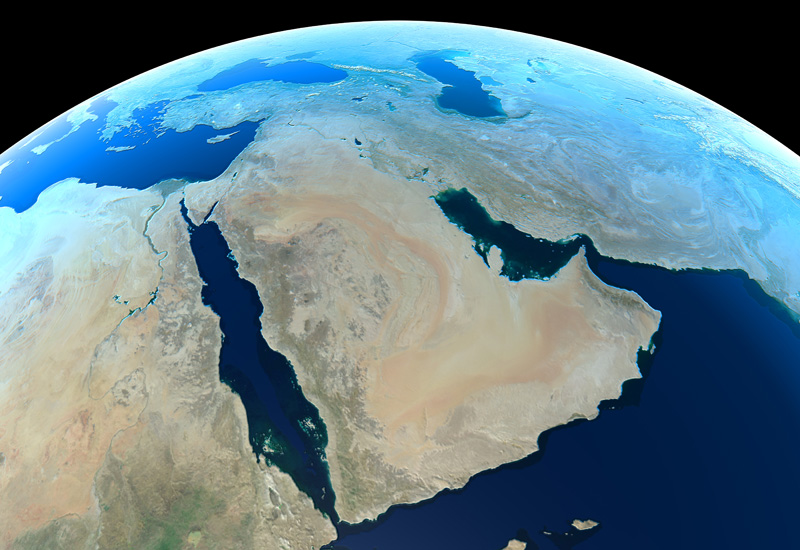
An introduction to the Middle East: Webquest

# Introduction

T

he Middle East is **the** defining international relations problem facing the world. It is a complex web of religious, cultural, historical and economic factors that impact on every person on the planet in our globalised world. It is much more than oil, 9/11, Muslims or the Arab-Israeli conflict over land in Palestine. While the ‘Arab Spring’ of earlier this year is beyond the scope of our syllabus, what you learn over the next three terms will give you a far more complex understanding of the region than most and will put what you read in the newspapers into a clearer light. (My tip: “Palestine” will be a hot topic in September 2011!)

It is easy (and the IB History Guide encourages us) to focus only on the interplay between nations. But as nations go to war, or militia groups wage terror campaigns, the lives of ordinary citizens are shattered, over and over, so much so that it becomes ‘normal’. So you shall also spend a little time considering, ‘What was it like to live in a Middle Eastern country during the second half of the twentieth century?’



(Figure 1: http://www.digitalproductionme.com)

# Task

*Using the internet links given and other authoritative online and offline sources, complete the following activities. Remember to* [*reference*](http://moodle.ais.com.sg/moodle/mod/resource/view.php?id=5459) *all of your work and include a* [*bibliography*](http://moodle.ais.com.sg/moodle/mod/resource/view.php?id=5458)*.*

This task has five parts:

1. [Introduction](#_What_is_the) to the Middle East [week 5]
2. [History](#_The_Middle_East) of the Middle East from 1900 to 1945 [week 6]
3. An examination of [western perspectives](#_The_Middle_East_1) towards the Middle East [week 7]
4. [Case study](#_Case_Study) of one Middle Eastern country from 1945-2000 [week 10]

(SL may choose 1945-1979)

1. Short [biography](#_Biography:_Individual) of an (ordinary) individual living in a Middle Eastern country (there may be a little crossover into the twenty-first century). **HL Only** [week 8]

*The whole task should be submitted with appropriate sub-headings, diagrams etc, by 8.30am on Friday 23 Sept (Wk 10) via Moodle.*

*There will also be an in class essay question for HL students on Tues 6 Sept p5 (Wk 8)*

Note that this is predominantly a homework task – there will be some time given especially for the group Case Study, but we will also be working from the text book and other sources throughout the term.





Figure 3: Gamel Abdul nasser (www.guardian.co.uk)



Figure 2: KEMAL ATATURK (www.bbc.co.uk)

Figure 4 David Ben-gurion (www.sanfranciscosentinel.com)

# 1. What is the Middle East?

## Define the Middle East

## Provide a labelled political map of the Middle East.

## Overview of Middle Eastern Countries

*Using the Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) World Factbook (*[*https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html*](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html)*), the Population Reference Bureau’s (PRB)* World Population Data Sheet *(*[*http://www.prb.org/pdf11/2011population-data-sheet\_eng.pdf*](http://www.prb.org/pdf11/2011population-data-sheet_eng.pdf)*) and other sources if necessary, construct a table of all Middle Eastern countries. (Algeria has been filled in for you as an example):*

| **Country** | **Flag** | **Population (latest est.) & GDP/GNI**  **PPP per cap** | **Major Religion/s** | **Major Race/s** | **Year of Independence** | **Previous ruler/s since 1900** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Algeria** | [http://www.mideastinfo.com/algflag.gif](http://www.mideastinfo.com/algeria.htm)  (MEIN) | 35.0m (CIA July-2011)  36.0m (PRB mid-2011)  $US8,110 (PRB) | Sunni Muslim (state religion) (CIA) | Arab-Berber (99%)  (CIA) | 1962  (CIA) | France  (CIA) |
| **etc.** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **etc.** |  |  |  |  |  |  |

# 2. The Middle East from WWI to WWII

Our unit concentrates on the Middle East from 1945 – 2000, but as ever in history, an idea of what has come before gives a solid grounding of what we are concentrating on.

Using Chapter Four of Habibi et al, *History of Europe and the Middle East* and at least three other appropriate sources, present a 5-7 minute outline of one of the following:

1. The First World War in the Middle East
2. The peace settlements and the mandate system
3. Palestine
4. The Second World War and the creation of the State of Israel
5. Iran and Reza Khan, 1924-41

Please upload your notes, slides and bibliography to the Moodle forum for others to share. In your report, give a short overview of your topic (may be *very similar* to your introduction!) and include the notes you took from the other presentations as an appendix.

For an Arab (Jordanian) perspective, (quickly) read Ch 1 (‘Conflict Begins’) of King Abdullah II’s [*Our Last Best Chance*](http://aiss-dphistory.wikispaces.com/Jordan)*.*

For an Israeli perspective, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a ‘History of Israel’ section, for this time period, see especially the part from “Ottoman Rule” onwards: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/History+of+Israel/HISTORY-%20Foreign%20Domination>



Figure 5 King hussein & king abdullah of jordan (+ tourist!)

(www.dougpile.com)

Figure 6 reza khan of iran

(www.nndb.com)

# 3. The Middle East & the West

Read ‘Crusades and Jihads in Postcolonial Times’:

(<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/recent/sept_11/west_01.shtml>)

What is/are the main point/s that Dr Sayyid is making in each section?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *Civilisation as we know it* |  |
| *After the Ottoman Empire* |  |
| *Democratic tyranny?* |  |
| *The ‘Islamic threat’* |  |
| *‘Westernese’* |  |
| *Telling tales* |  |



Figures 7 & 8 ‘What is ‘muslim’?

(http://www.bbc.co.uk

http://www.sethskim.com)

# 4. Case Study

In small groups (may be individual, pair or three) choose one Middle Eastern state (excluding Egypt) and compile a case study which examines:

* the nature of the government;
* domestic policies;
* opposition and dissent

in the period 1945-2000.

(The syllabus suggests suitable examples could be Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Syria or any other relevant state. I strongly recommend **Israel**, as that will give you an excellent grounding for the Prescribed Subject in Term 4. I encourage **all** groups to do **Israel**!)

*Note: the Prescribed Subject for Paper 1 finishes at 1979. For Paper 3, you must continue through to 2000. You may wish to organise yourselves into SL (who may finish at 1979) and HL (through to 2000).*

**Weblinks:**

Israel Government Home Page (English): <http://www.gov.il/firstgov/english>

Israel Government, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Historical Overview: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/history/history%20of%20israel/>

(See also the many links on the right hand side)

Jewish Agency for Israel: ‘Arab Israel Conflict in Maps’: <http://www.jewishagency.org/JewishAgency/English/Jewish+Education/compelling+content/Eye+on+Israel/Maps/Israel+and+Zionism+Maps>

(Not just maps, but description of many aspects of the history of Israel.)

Negotiations Affairs Department, Palestine Liberation Organisation:

<http://www.nad-plo.org/>

Jewish Virtual Library ‘PLO’: <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Terrorism/plo.html>

(“The Palestine Liberation Organization is undoubtedly one of the best known terrorist organizations in the world. Accordingly, the organization is led by perhaps the best known individual in the modern history of international terrorism; Yassir Arafat.”

OK, 2 problems: 1. It’s hardly objective, if that’s its opening line. 2. Arafat died in 2004!)

Case Study [contd]

*Note: most of these links are from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

*I have not listed all the relevant pages from MFA, some you can find for yourself. Check the links on the right side of MFA pages.*

Figure 9 Symbol of state of israel Menorah with olive branches (www.bje.org.au)

## Israel: Nature of Government

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2001/6/Political+Structure+and+Elections.htm>

Political structure and elections in Israel

## Israel: Domestic Policies

Don’t just focus on Palestinian issues (more in Term 4) but what needed to be done to build a nation amid increasing population growth and immigration.

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/History+of+Israel/HISTORY-%20The%20State%20of%20Israel>

Has a good range of domestic policies mentioned throughout an overview of the State of Israel from 1948.

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/History/HISTORY-+The+Peace+Process.htm>

Outlines the Madrid Peace Conference (1991) and Israel’s allowance of Palestinian self-government of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

## http://www.knesset.gov.il/review/data/photo/kns13_1-b.jpgIsrael: Opposition & Dissent

Obviously, Palestine. What else?

Hamas

Anti-Semitism

Terror

Opposition within the political system

(See sections on ‘Forming a Government’ and ‘Elections’:

FIGURE 10 RABIN, CLINTON & ARAFAT

(http://www.knesset.gov.il/)

<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2001/6/Political+Structure+and+Elections.htm>

# 5. Biography: Individual

What was the effect of living in a Middle Eastern country on an ‘ordinary’ person? This person should not be a leader, royalty etc. It may be someone who is still in the Middle East or has since left. It should have a significant degree of detail about life in the twentieth century, but may also describe life post-2000.

It need only be around 300 words, but you may do more. I give the following as an example of what you may do. I appreciate that mostly you will find a single article (without looking, may I suggest JSTOR, Newsbank and TIME as good starting points, after Googling ‘Life in the Middle East’ gives you how to live as an expat in Dubai!)



FIGURE 11 FROM 'MIDDLE EAST FASHION BLOG'

(http://www.womensfashion365.com)

## Example

*Sahar S. Gabriel describes aspects of her life as a Christian living in the north of Iraq under Saddam Hussein and then following his downfall. At the time of writing, she is leaving Iraq as a refugee to the USA.*

In the first article, she writes of the rising aggression of Islam towards minority religions; while favouritism towards Muslims and disdain by Muslims towards Christians was around in Saddam’s time, it is now less ‘subtle’. A taxi driver once said to her father, ‘You are so educated and intelligent, how come you are not a Muslim?’ Girls her own age would ask her a similar question.

Christians started leaving Iraq in 1990 after Saddam invaded Kuwait. After hearing stories from returning Iraqi soldiers, they realised that perhaps this treatment could happen to them. They left much more quickly after 2003 and the rise of extremists. Kidnappings started as Christians were illogically assumed to have millions of dollars as they had relatives overseas who would send home some money. Her uncle was kidnapped and ransomed for $30,000. Her area that was 80% Christian is now about 5%.

The second article talks about learning English, from 5th Grade to watching English-language Iraqi detective shows about all the depravities of the US. She ignored the content but soaked up the language. She discussed with some humour other examples of circumstances that exposed her to English: CDs of 1990s boy bands from a friend with a diplomat father, satellite TV in the Kurdish north with 24 hour English channels (where she spent two days straight until her mum told her she stank!) and Eminem (she loved the rhyme of rap, and the stories Eminem told which was so different from most Arab songs of love ‘You love her. She loves you. Ok, we get it.’). She concluded with a fabulous quote from her father, ‘You have to open yourself entirely to the book, to the possibility that it presents.’ It seems that in learning a new language, she also opened herself to the possibilities it presents.

The third article is titled ‘A childhood under Saddam’ (who they were taught as children to call ‘Baba (Papa) Saddam’. Surprisingly, she asserts that even though ‘we didn’t like him much, he protected the Christians … Not that I am saying in any way that we want him back’. The Islamist movements of post-2003 were held in check. As Saddam controlled all media, everything she knew was filtered through his censorship. As she grew into a teenager, she realised that things didn’t add up: she compared post-1991 Gulf War Iraq with Japan’s post-WWII development: ‘They survived a war … Why couldn’t Iraq do it?’

She learnt from watching her dad over the years not to say anything though. She didn’t realise about being arrested, but it was natural for her to not criticise. She finishes with a surprising dichotomy: Iraqis had ‘always known that he tortured people’, especially critics, but they were surprised at the number of people in the mass graves. Perhaps even in the face of all the evidence, it is impossible for people to fathom the extent to which despots will stoop to retain their power.

Overall, Gabriel presents a view of a reasonably happy and normal childhood, yet with vignettes that make one stop and wonder at the freedom and safety of our own lives, barely comprehending a life that eventually makes someone flee their homeland.

<http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/19/leaving-iraq-an-iraqi-christian/>

<http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/20/leaving-iraq-ii-learning-english/>

<http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/03/24/leaving-iraq-iii-a-childhood-under-saddam/>

# Resources (suggested)

AMIN: <http://www.amin.org/Eindex.php>

The Arab Median Internet Network has current and archived news articles that originated in the Middle East about Middle Eastern affairs. It is a great site for an Arab perspective on current and recent historical events.

CIA: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

*The CIA World Factbook has been a staple reference for the US Government since WWII and for the general public since 1975, with information on the geography, people, government, economy, communications, military, transportation and transnational issues of every country.*

Habibi, M, Jafari, P, Jones-Nerzic, R, Keys, D & Smith, D (2010) *History of Europe and the Middle East: Course Companion for IB Diploma Programme*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

*The (blue) textbook, see particularly Chapter 4 for WWI-WWII timeframe and Chapter 6 for post-WWII.*

MEIN: <http://www.mideastinfo.com/countries.html>

*The Middle East Information Network, with contributors from American and Middle Eastern universities, aims to ‘[provide] accurate and comprehensive information about the Middle East’ in a ‘non-partisan’ manner to ‘break down the barriers and stereotypes’ of the Middle Eastern countries and people.*

MFA: <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/>

The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs has a great number of informative pages on Israeli history and government, as well as links to good external sites.

PRB: <http://www.prb.org/pdf11/2011population-data-sheet_eng.pdf>

*The Population Reference Bureau is a not-for-profit NGO based in the USA which researches and disseminates information on population related matters. The World Population Data Sheet is one of my favourite pieces of nerdy go-to information! Between this and the CIA Factbook, you know pretty much everything about a country except the colour of the President’s undies!*

UN: <http://www.un.org/en/members/index.shtml>

*Member states page of the United Nations. Each country which is a member of the UN has a page, with a variety of information, particularly that country’s involvement in the UN.*

# Resources (student research)

As I have done above, write a short *annotation* to describe each source you use and why you used it / think it is an authoritative source.

There is no need to annotate the sources I have given above, but if you use them you must include them. Remember to use in-text referencing as you go.

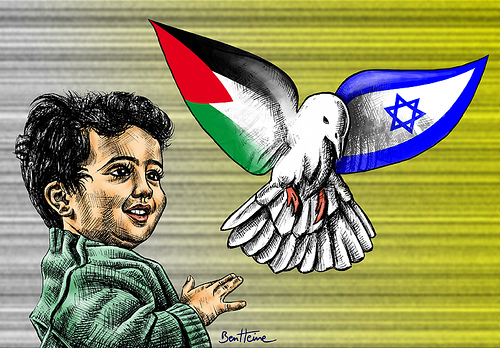


FIGURE 12 http://ethicalcomment.wordpress.com

# Assessment Criteria

*(Needs to be updated. Will be added soon! Will be similar to last semester’s)*

# Bibliography

*(Needs to be put into proper bibliographic format and completed)*

**Photo Credits**

<http://www.digitalproductionme.com/article-2392-atempo-signs-mediacast-as-middle-east-reseller/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/ataturk_kemal.shtml>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/sep/30/nasser-egypt-death-nostalgia>

<http://www.sanfranciscosentinel.com/?p=39570>

<http://www.dougpile.com/favphotos/petra.php>

<http://www.nndb.com/people/685/000120325/>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/recent/sept_11/west_01.shtml>

<http://www.sethskim.com/2009/10/15/the-reminders-through-the-call-to-prayer/>

<http://www.bje.org.au/learning/israel/symbols.html>

<http://www.knesset.gov.il/review/PhotoPage.aspx?pho=1348>

<http://www.womensfashion365.com/2009/06/buying-womens-middle-east-fashions.html>

<http://ethicalcomment.wordpress.com/2010/11/29/is-the-middle-east-peace-process-dead-or-merely-dying/>